



Code of Conduct

This Oconee County Public Library Code of Conduct (“Code of Conduct”) is hereby adopted by the Board of Trustees of the Oconee County Public Library system (the “Library”), pursuant to the authority granted under S.C. Code of Laws §4-9-37, 1976, as amended, to ensure effective operation, maintenance and security of the property of the Library.

The Library, as a public service organization, exists to serve all members of the community. The purpose of the Library is to meet informational needs, promote the enjoyment of learning, strengthen life-long learning, and promote reading.

In order to provide an atmosphere conducive to serving the needs of the public, the following Code of Conduct shall apply to all persons utilizing the Library or otherwise entering the Library premises:

- All persons are expected to behave in a manner consistent with the rights of others to have a safe and studious atmosphere in the Library.
- All persons shall refrain from inappropriate behavior, including, but not limited to, the following:
 - Loitering—defined as lingering idly or aimlessly in any area of the Library without purpose, or hanging around in clusters and causing unusually loud or disturbing noises
 - Sleeping
 - Failure to wear shoes and shirts on Library premises
 - Behaving in a disorderly, loud, or disruptive manner
 - Excessive and disruptive conversations
 - Eating or drinking in a public area of the Library
 - Monopolizing unreasonable numbers of Library materials at any given time
 - Unauthorized canvassing, selling, soliciting, or engaging in any other commercial activity
 - Violating internet and computer policies (see OCPL Wireless and Access to Computer/Internet Resources Policies)
 - Bathing, shaving, or laundering clothes in public restrooms
 - Congregating or parking in unauthorized groups
 - Excessive staring at patrons or staff
 - Inappropriate actions, references, or remarks in any format which may cause offense to a person’s gender, race, color, religion, sex, marital status, nationality, family status, dress, sexual orientation, beliefs, disability, age or membership in a particular community
 - Making unwanted sexual advances toward others or inappropriate touching
 - Preventing staff from normal, reasonable clean-up or reshelving activities, especially 10 minutes before closing
 - Smoking, use of any tobacco products including, but not limited to: cigarettes, cigars, chewing tobacco or use of a nicotine delivery system that produces smoke or vapor, in the buildings or within 25 feet of any library entrance
 - Disrupting employees so as to interfere with their work
 - Photographing other users of the library without their permission

- Bringing any animal into the Library, except properly registered working animals assisting the disabled
- Inappropriate use of cell phones or other communication devices
- Inappropriate use of the Children's Services sections of the Library by an adult who is not involved in the appropriate use of children's library materials, including, in the discretion of Library staff, spending an unnecessary and unusual amount of time in the Children's Services sections of the Library
- Interfering with free passage of others
- Leaving young children or vulnerable adults unsupervised or unattended
- Having offensive personal hygiene
- Leaving personal property unattended
- Bringing in items, backpacks, or other personal baggage that: a) takes up an excessive amount of space, b) restricts the movement of individuals, c) presents a potential harm, danger, or distraction; or d) has no usefulness in the Library. Luggage, bedrolls, musical instruments (except as part of a library program), sports equipment (except as part of a library program), skateboards, skates (including heellies), scooters, and bicycles are examples of items that are prohibited
- Other activities which are inconsistent with activities such as reading, studying, use of Library materials, and other similar conduct normally associated with the use of public library facilities
- All persons shall refrain from illegal or otherwise highly inappropriate behavior, including, but not limited to, the following:
 - Stealing, defacing or damaging Library property
 - Abusive, indecent, profane or drunken conversation and/or being in a state of intoxication or under the influence of drugs on Library premises
 - Physical, sexual or verbal abuse of other Library users or of Library staff
 - Carrying weapons of any type unless authorized by law
 - Communication of threats, physical violence, or sexual offense
 - Knowingly entering non-public areas of Library or other breach of Library security, including remaining inside the Library when it is not open to the public
 - Committing any misdemeanor or felony, or the violation of any federal law, state law, or municipal or county ordinances on Library premises
- Vulnerable adults and children under twelve (12) years of age must be accompanied at all times by an older, responsible person, at least 16 years of age. The child's parent or guardian will be contacted if the child is left unattended. The library reserves the right to turn over to the proper authorities vulnerable adults and minors (under age 18) left unattended for extended periods of time or left after library hours.

Any persons violating the Code of Conduct, may, in the discretion of the Library, be asked to immediately leave the Library premises. In some cases, including, but not limited to cases where persons fail to refrain from illegal or otherwise highly inappropriate behavior, the Library may immediately have a person removed from the Library premises by law enforcement. In addition, repeated inappropriate behavior, illegal behavior, or highly inappropriate behavior may result in the issuance of a trespass warning in accordance with S.C. Code of Laws §16-11-625.

Librarians and staff are in charge of the facilities and have the authority to enforce these standards of behavior. Further, this Code of Conduct cannot be all-inclusive; therefore, the librarians and staff may find it necessary on occasion to impose additional sensible requirements.