



SUSPENSION POLICY AND PROCEDURES

NHFPL and its Board of Directors are proud of the library system's five welcoming facilities, its bookmobile, collections and services to users across the city. The library takes its mission to serve as an educational and cultural resource for the citizens of New Haven very seriously. To that end, and in order to ensure appropriate usage and the safety and health of all residents, the Library and Board have enacted the suspension policies and procedures outlined here.

The New Haven Free Public Library's Code of Conduct and Suspension Policy protect the rights and safety of library staff and users and are intended to preserve and protect the library's property, its collections and facilities.

CODE OF CONDUCT

When any patron enters the library, s/he is expected to follow the library's policies and Code of Conduct and is entitled to the reasonable expectation that others will do the same. The Conduct policies are enacted by the Library Board and are posted in English and Spanish on the Library's website as well as on the main floor of the Ives/ Main Library, in each of the four branches and on the Readmobile. The City of New Haven's Workplace Violence Policy is also posted on the Library's website and at all locations.

Library users who violate the Code of Conduct and library and City policies, including the City of New Haven's Workplace Violence Policy, are subject to suspension of library privileges, which can include exclusion from all NHFPL libraries for designated periods of time. Users may also face possible legal action.

Library staff have the right and responsibility to protect the safety of staff and customers and library property and to maintain order on library premises. Under certain circumstances it may become necessary for staff and security personnel to deal with disruptive, illegal or unsafe behavior that violates the Code of Conduct or other library or city policies or city, state or federal laws.

All staff should be familiar with the Code of Conduct, Workplace Violence and other policies pertaining to appropriate use of and behavior in NHFPL's facilities. The Code of Conduct is posted on the Library's website and at all locations; a full set of policies, including the Computer Use and Unattended Children policies, is accessible on the staff intranet.

ENFORCEMENT OF EXPECTATIONS OF BEHAVIOR: INCIDENT REPORTS AND LETTERS OF SUSPENSION

Designated staff, including staff temporarily in charge of a branch or department, supervisors, branch managers and security personnel may ask a user to leave library property for the day if, after being asked to stop a particular behavior, they refuse or are uncooperative. If the user refuses to leave they are trespassing and the police should be called at 911.

The following are more detailed guidelines for handling inappropriate library behavior:

1. Once a staff member observes inappropriate behavior, s/he contacts a supervisor or person-in-charge and Security. They approach the patron, explain the policy, ask them to stop the behavior and warn them that they will be asked to leave if the behavior continues.
2. If the behavior continues, a supervisor, with Security or with another staff member approaches the patron and asks him/her to leave the building. At this point it's important to ask the user's name for incident report documentation.
3. If the patron escalates their behavior (*e.g., harassing staff members and patrons*), the supervisor should let the patron know that not adhering to the Code of Conduct will result in a suspension of library privileges, including exclusion from all locations for a period of time.
4. For some behaviors the warning is waived and the patron can be immediately asked to leave, for example intoxication, health hazard exposure, etc.
5. The warning step is waived in the case of illegal activity. Staff are not required to approach users engaged in illegal behavior. The guard is notified and the police are called immediately.
6. If, after a warning is issued, the patron refuses to leave, inform them that they are trespassing and that the police are being called; the guard or staff-in-charge calls the police at 911.
7. Where warranted, a letter of suspension based on guidelines below (SUSPENSION POLICY GUIDELINES) will be issued by the Library Director or her designee.
8. The letter of suspension is issued where there is either an illegal action(s) and/or egregious infraction of the Code of Conduct and/or the user has built up a history of incidents that, in the judgment of library administration, justify a suspension.
9. All incidents MUST be documented by all staff involved; this becomes documentation that supports the suspension. The suspension letter and supporting incident reports are forwarded to the CAO and Deputy CAO. The user's library record, if there is one, should be attached to the incident report. The right of appeal resides with the CAO.
10. The suspension letter is either handed to the person by the security guard when they next enter the building or mailed to their home (if address is known) or, in the

case of minors, mailed to their parents. Letters of suspension are written in Spanish where required.

11. The Circulation Manager receives a copy of the letter and places a block on the user's library card with a note explaining the suspension reason and period.
12. Incident Reports are sent to: The City Librarian, Deputy City Librarian, the Adult and Children's Administrators, the Safety Officer and Branch Managers. The form is available on the staff intranet and all incident reports are stored there.
13. Copies of the suspension letter are emailed to each public services manager and posted to the intranet.
14. As noted above, the CAO's Office is the adjudicator for users who wish to appeal their suspension. So that all suspended persons are aware of the appeal process the suspension letter cites the process and a copy of the REQUEST FOR REVIEW OF SUSPENSION form is attached to the suspension letter.

PURPOSE OF INCIDENT REPORTS

1. An Incident Report is meant to document an incident that has occurred in the Library in violation of the Code of Conduct or other relevant policies.
2. The reports must be used to document medical emergencies, accidents, violations of our policies and disruptive behavior by patrons.
3. Incident Reports inform decisions leading to suspensions. Incident Reports act as documentation to justify the suspension. In most cases they are required before a suspension can be issued.
4. An incident report in and of itself does not automatically lead to a suspension; although, based on the severity of the incident, it can be used as justification for an immediate suspension.
5. All Incident Reports are kept on file on the intranet and referred to as needed.

PROGRESSIVE SUSPENSION GUIDELINES

1. When it becomes necessary to suspend a patron from the Library for a period of time it is understood that the Director or her designee has the authority to dictate the term of suspension, but in general the library will use the following guidelines:
 - First Suspension: Up to 1 month
 - Second Suspension: 3 months
 - Third Suspension: 6 months
 - 12-month suspensions may also be issued.
2. Based on the severity of the infraction, a suspension of up to six months or a year may be applied without advance warning or prior suspension. Examples include, but are not limited to:
 - Physical abuse or assault
 - Fighting
 - Engaging in or soliciting any sexual act
 - Damaging or destroying library property

- Disruptive behavior that involves violent and/or threatening words and/or actions toward staff or other patrons
3. In certain cases, and in conjunction with the Chief Administrator's Office, longer suspensions may be issued.
 4. All Branches will be notified of a patron's suspension. Suspensions are system wide.
 5. A person who is suspended is not allowed to enter the Main Library, branches or bookmobile.
 6. If a person who is under suspension enters the Main Library or any of the Branches, s/he will be subject to arrest for trespassing. Staff should call Security and 911 without engaging with the suspended person(s).
 7. At the Director's discretion a suspended patron who enters any library during the suspension period may have their suspension extended by having the suspension period restart on the date that they broke their suspension. This policy will be outlined in the original suspension letter and, where warranted, a new letter of suspension will be issued.

RIGHT OF APPEAL

1. All suspended users may appeal their suspension, in writing, to the CAO's Office using the REQUEST FOR REVIEW OF SUSPENSION form.
2. The form will be attached to all Suspension letters.
3. Individuals must deliver or mail the request to the Chief Administrator's Office, 165 Church St., New Haven, CT 06510.

Approved by the Board of Library Directors March 24, 2015

Chief Administrator's Office, 165 Church Street, New Haven, CT 06510