

Revision Date: November 2020 Policy Type: Public Service
Approval Level: CEO Distribution: All Employees
Review Schedule: 5 Years (or as required)

1. PURPOSE

Markham Public Library (MPL) promotes safety, respect and inclusion by offering welcoming spaces and a destination where all community members have equitable access to services. MPL requests the cooperation of all community members to maintain an environment conducive to the enjoyable and productive use of the Library.

This policy outlines expectations for behaviour in our spaces; this includes both our physical locations and digital platforms. Library staff will make every effort to apply these rules in a fair, dignified and positive manner, for the benefit of all. In order to ensure the safety and inclusivity of our spaces, staff are empowered to take appropriate action to resolve issues; MPL does not tolerate violence, harassment, vandalism or other abusive or unacceptable behaviours that undermine the safety or dignity of staff and/or customers.

2. CUSTOMER SERVICE PROMISE

MPL is committed to providing opportunities for learning, playing, reading, connecting, and creating in order to enhance the lives of our members and the quality of the community. Our **Customer Service Promise** outlines expectations for how staff and customers contribute to a welcoming community space. Our **Customer Service Promise** expects that all customers will work collaboratively with staff to maintain a respectful environment and preserve the comfort and safety of everyone in our spaces.

3. DEFINITIONS

“Disruptive Behaviour” is behaviour that interferes with the normal operation of the Library or which interferes with another customer’s ability to use and/or enjoy our physical or digital spaces. This includes, but is not limited to excessive noise and the use of language or behaviours that harass, discriminate or compromise the dignity of staff or customers.

“Unsafe Behaviour” includes actions that compromise the safety of Library staff and/or customers. This includes but is not limited to failing to provide appropriate supervision for children, and engaging in rough or unsafe activities that may result in physical harm.

“Illegal Behaviour” is an act committed in violation of the Criminal Code of Canada. This includes, but is not limited to abusive, harassing or violent behaviour and/or language either in person, over the phone or online, assault, elicit sexual behaviour, stalking, theft, vandalism, copyright violations and illegal online activities including those that promote the following:

Sedition - Teaching, advocating, publishing, or circulating writing that advocates the use of force as a means of accomplishing governmental change in Canada.

Obscenity - The Criminal Code of Canada (The Act) defines as obscene any publication

whose dominant characteristic is undue exploitation of sex, or any one or more of the following: crime, horror, cruelty and violence.

Child Pornography - Material depicting sexual acts involving someone under age 18, depiction for a sexual purpose images of the sexual organs or anal region of someone under the age of 18, or counseling, grooming or advocating sexual activity with a person under the age of 18. The act of viewing child pornography is considered possession of child pornography.

Hate Propaganda - Advocating or promoting genocide or the public incitement of hatred against an identifiable group.

“Violence” includes but is not limited to the following:

- Loud verbal assaults
- Threats and/or attempts to intimidate
- Throwing of articles in a deliberate or aggressive manner
- Aggressive approaches to another individual or group
- Physical striking of another individual
- Attempts to incite violence in others
- Racial or ethnic slurs
- Damage to or theft of property
- Abusive language
- Sexual assault
- Other illicit sexual activities, including indecent exposure and masturbation
- Stalking or stalking-like behaviour
- Any of the above behaviours occurring via MPL’s digital services or social media platforms

“Harassment” is defined in the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* as being a course of behaviour that is or ought to be known to be vexation. This can include discrimination, sexual harassment, violence, bullying, gossip or violence, and would constitute unacceptable behaviour.

“Vandalism” is defined as the malicious, wilful, intent to destruct or deliberate destruction, damage or defacing of property.

“Digital Platforms” refers to MPL’s online collection of electronic resources and services that can be accessed remotely via computer networks and Internet connection. This includes MPL’s social media platforms.

4. UNACCEPTABLE CONDUCT

MPL strives to create welcoming and inclusive spaces in our physical locations (Library branches), on our digital platforms and in the community. In order to ensure the safety and enjoyment of all customers, staff will intervene in situations where behaviour is deemed illegal, disruptive or unsafe. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Illegal activities including copyright violations, theft, vandalism and illegal online activities
- Abusive, harassing or violent behaviour or language either in person, over phone or online
- Excessive or disruptive noise or odors
- Racist, sexist, homophobic, xenophobic remarks or behaviours that discriminate or compromise the dignity of staff or customers

- Exposing others to online content that would negatively impact their enjoyment of the library, including pornography or graphic violence
- Failing to provide children with appropriate supervision
- Unsafe activity or disruptive use of library facilities

Engaging in any of the behaviour described above may result in the suspension of library privileges and/or being asked to leave the premises.

MPL requests the cooperation of all staff and customers in maintaining an environment conducive to the enjoyment and productive use of the space by respecting library policy. Staff will address issues in a fair, dignified and positive manner in order to balance the needs of our customers.

5. RELATED DOCUMENTS

Customer Service Promise
Disruptive and Unsafe Behaviour Procedure
Illegal Behaviour Procedure