
Customer Policies and Procedures

CUSTOMER POLICIES and PROCEDURES

TTY SERVICE

POLICY:

Any person, including the hearing public, may use the library's PC equipment with TTY communication software.

LOST AND FOUND

POLICY:

Items belonging to customers and left in branches, AO, or other library locations should be placed in the areas designated "LOST AND FOUND" in each location. Cash should be properly marked and secured in safe or other secure location.

Items remaining in LOST AND FOUND for thirty days will be donated to charity or discarded.

It is not appropriate for staff to claim items (including money) left on library property. After 30 days, money must be sent to Finance to be placed in the library gift account.

PETITIONS ON LIBRARY PROPERTY

POLICY:

Petitioning is allowed on library property with the following restrictions:

- All petitioning must occur outside the building (library specific petitions accepted).
- Entrances may not be blocked in any way.
- Petitioners may not aggressively approach customers or staff.

SOLICITATION ON LIBRARY PREMISES

POLICY:

Solicitation of any kind is prohibited in any Prince George's County Memorial Library System Facility or on the premises.

The only exceptions to this are as follows:

- Sale of library promotional materials is permitted in the Library Bookstores and in temporary areas set up by Friends in branches without a bookstore.
- Authorized Friends of Library Groups are permitted to hold two fundraising events in their respective branches each year. Minor fundraising activities such as bake sales may also be held occasionally with approval from the Area Manager.
- The sale of books and audio-visual materials is permitted in Library sponsored programs.

SUSPENSION PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES

POLICY:

Customers who repeatedly disregard the Rules of Conduct established by the Library Board of Prince George's County Memorial Library may have their library privileges suspended for a specified period of time from all branches of the Prince George's County Memorial Library. Suspending privileges is a way to prevent repeated offenses and have legal documentation to claim trespassing. If an area manager decides to suspend a customer he/she may do so without immediate police involvement. Suspending does not preclude calling the police if illegal activity takes place. The police should be called and a report filed when any illegal activity occurs. The police can be helpful in presenting the

suspension notice or document to the customer and explaining the consequences for ignoring it. PGCMLS must keep an account of all suspension actions taken for a minimum of 3 years. For repeat offenders, a longer period of time is advisable. The library needs documenting evidence of the suspension if charges are to be filed for trespassing if a suspended customer returns before the suspension has ended.

Area Managers have the authority to make decisions about the length of the revocation of library privileges but should consider the guidelines below. Area managers have the responsibility for suspending customers. Whenever feasible and in order to eliminate any misunderstanding, customers whose continued misconduct may cause them to be suspended should be warned verbally or by a letter.

Suspended customers may appeal the action in writing to the Chief Executive Officer of the Prince George's County Memorial Library.

The length of a suspension may vary depending on the severity of the misconduct, from no less than 30 days to no more than one year. It is important to provide consistency among branches and for that purpose listed below are some suggested lengths of suspensions for various offenses.

30 days

- Accessing pornographic Internet sites after a warning.
- Continued misbehavior, e.g. loud talking and socializing.
- Failure to obey a directive from the staff. Unauthorized use of a library card.
- Abusive language

6 months

- Repeat of a 30-day offense. Malicious mutilation of materials.
- Tampering with library equipment

1 year

- Repeat of a 6-month offense
- Verbal threats to staff or customers
- Theft of materials
- Vandalism of library property
- Fighting and other physically threatening behavior
- Sexual harassment of staff or customers
- Indecent exposure

Permanent Suspension

- Can be instituted by the CEO or a Law Enforcement Agency only.

These are guidelines only and are not meant to be the only infractions that will result in banning. Area Managers should understand the PGCMLS Library Rules of Behavior and use good judgment in each situation to determine the length of the suspension. If there are any questions, consult with the Chief Operating Officer for Public Services.

Banning Procedures

Managers who have decided to ban a customer should use the following procedures. The Area Manager or his/her designee will:

1. Complete the Suspension of Library Privileges form: <link>
2. The form may be hand delivered to the customer in the library or sent to his/her home address as listed in the PGCMLS customer database.
3. Send a copy of the signed letter to PS. PS will send the letter certified mail with a return receipt. A copy of the letter will be kept on file.
4. A copy of the suspension should be held at the branch to be hand delivered if the customer says he did not receive the letter. Create a permanent place for this information and make certain all staff know where it is kept.
5. If the complete name and address of the customer is not known, use all known information including a description, if necessary, and deliver the letter to the customer in the branch.
6. Contact the Circulation Services Specialist to have the customer's account blocked until the suspension period has ended.

There may be occasions in libraries where there is a need to ban someone for a short period of time. An example of this may be when students exhibit rowdiness while working in a group and a staff member asks them to leave and not return for a cooling off period for the rest of the week. In these cases, a Library Incident Report should be completed and kept on file in the branch in case it is necessary to document the incident to parents or in a future occurrence.

If a customer has been suspended and returns to any Prince George's County Memorial Library he/she is trespassing and should be asked to leave by the librarian-in-charge. If the customer refuses to leave immediately, the police should be called. The librarian-in-charge should retrieve a copy of the documenting letter to present to the police officer. When the police arrive they may do one of the following:

1. If clear documentation of the suspension is available and the customer is present, the police may decide to arrest. A police report will be taken.
2. An officer may decide not to arrest a customer if he/she is not sure the customer was aware of the suspension, or if the incident is not serious enough to warrant arrest. In this case, the officer may decide only to tell the customer to leave the premises.

Librarians who may be in charge should call the police if there is an occurrence of trespass. Each library should establish a procedure that communicates information about the suspended customer to the rest of the staff.

FAX MACHINES

POLICY:

Fax machines are to be used in adherence to the PGCMLS Customer Service Code and the PGCMLS Technology Policy.

CUSTOMER USE OF LIBRARY TELEPHONES

POLICY:

Customers may use Library telephones for local calls in emergencies.

CUSTOMER CODE OF CONDUCT

The Prince George’s County Memorial Library System has established the following rules to ensure a safe and welcoming environment for all. Actions that disrupt the use of the Library by others are not permitted. Examples are provided to better define behaviors, but inappropriate activities are not limited to these examples.

1. Any act which is unlawful or which could result in physical harm to persons or property or is inconsistent with the general purpose of the library is prohibited.
2. Conduct considered improper in the Library includes, but is not limited to:
 - Disorderly or disruptive conduct of any kind, including loud voices or noise, running, throwing any object, fighting, abusive/obscene language;
 - Destroying or damaging library property or equipment
 - Loitering, congregating in the lobby, toilet facilities, or outside the building;
 - Interfering with the free passage of those in or on the premises or trespassing into staff areas; (County Code, Sec. 14-139.03)
 - Solicitation or literature disbursement or posting without approval;
 - Sleeping;
 - Bathing on library premises is prohibited
 - Rearranging or tampering with furniture or equipment;
 - Harassment of others;
 - Indecent exposure;
 - Sexual acts;
 - Offensive personal hygiene.
3. Eating and drinking is only allowed in designated areas. Bottled water is permitted.
4. Appropriate attire is required. For example, shoes and shirts must be worn.
5. Parents/caregivers are responsible for supervising their children while in the library and ensuring that their children obey library rules. Children under the age of 8 may not be left unattended. Maryland law requires that caregivers must be at least 13 years of age. Police may be notified if minors are left unattended. (MD ANN Code, Family Law 5-801)
6. Only animals assisting people with disabilities are allowed in the building. Animals may not be tied or unattended on library grounds or in the building.
7. All users must follow the rules for library computer use outlined in the *PGCMLS Acceptable Use Policy*. ([link](#))
8. Library staff has the authority and responsibility to enforce these rules. Customers must follow all reasonable requests of the library staff. Failure to observe these rules may result in loss of privileges and exclusion from the library for a designated period of time.