



Address 123 North Main Street, Fitzgerald, Georgia 31750 | **Phone** (229) 426-5080 | **Fax** (229) 426-5084 | **Website** www.fbhcl.org

Patron Responsibilities and Conduct Policy

Approved by Board of Trustees January 2012, revised April 2017

The Fitzgerald-Ben Hill County Library strives to provide an atmosphere that is conducive to the appropriate use of library services and resources. The Library is committed to providing its users an atmosphere and environment free from unnecessary distractions and conducive to the most efficient use of the library's facilities.

To ensure the maintenance of a pleasant environment, and to protect the resources of the library, the Library Board has established the following guidelines defining appropriate behavior for all those who use the library.

- Children under the age of 10 and dependent persons must be accompanied by a responsible adult while in the library (as outlined in the Children and Dependent Adult Policy).
- Food and/or drinks are discouraged. Library staff may limit food and/or drinks as they feel necessary to protect library property.
- Appropriate clothing, including shirt and shoes are required.
- Cell Phone use is discouraged. Library staff may limit cell phone use as they see necessary to protect the rights of other library users.

Disruptive behavior is any behavior which either consciously or unconsciously violates or restricts the rights of patrons or staff to use the Library.

BEHAVIOR AND/OR ACTION WHICH ARE CONSIDERED TO BE DISRUPTIVE AND/OR UNSAFE ARE PROHIBITED ON LIBRARY PROPERTY. THESE MAY INCLUDE, BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO:

- Use of tobacco and vaping / e-cigarette products within 25 feet of the building.
- Any loud, unreasonable, and/or disruptive noises created by persons, audio devices, cell phones or other devices.
- Engaging in disorderly conduct, fighting or challenging a fight, or using offensive language that is likely to provoke violence.
- Running in or around the library.
- Exhibiting offensive personal hygiene, failure to wear appropriate clothing or the failure to secure clothes with buttons, zippers, belts, or other devices.
- Placing feet or legs on furniture or misusing/abusing furniture.
- Rearranging library furniture or equipment from one location to another without permission.
- Use of tobacco and vaping / e-cigarette products or being intoxicated or possessing intoxicants.
- Bringing animals or pets in the library (except for guide dogs for the physically impaired).
- Following a person around the library, staring at a person, or persistently asking a person questions.
- Disturbing or posting printed material/literature that has not been approved by the Library. Soliciting for money or items or services.
- Panhandling or loitering inside building or on library grounds.

- Misuse of restrooms. Restrooms are for library patron use only. Changing of clothes or bathing in restrooms is not permitted.
- Taking library materials into bathrooms.
- Carrying weapons of any type.
- Entering non-public areas without staff consent.
- Certain acts involving computer fraud or abuse of library system network computers or display of obscene materials on computer equipment (covered under the Georgia Computer Services Protection Act and punishable by fine, imprisonment or both).
- Refusing to comply with requests of any member of the library staff.

A disruptive individual or group will be approached by library staff in the following manner:

1. Give verbal warning to the individual or group indicating that such behavior is disruptive and is unacceptable. Staff may skip this step and move to step #3, if circumstances warrant.
2. If it is a disruptive child or dependent person, approach the parent/guardian with the same warning.
3. If the disruptive behavior still continues:
 - Request individual or group to leave the library premises.
 - Request parent/guardian to escort the child or dependent person from the library premises
 - If an individual or group has been asked to leave the premises, library staff may choose to ban he/she/them for the remainder of the day.
 - If the individual or group refuses to leave the library premises, or if the parent/guardian will not escort the child or dependent person from the library premises, library staff will call the police.
4. Upon a third occurrence, the disruptive individual or group may lose library privileges and must successfully petition the Director or Board Chairman to regain access.

Any person who disregards a request by a staff member to leave the building for any reason will be immediately reported to local law enforcement.

Interpretation of this policy and what constitutes disruptive behavior is at the discretion of the Library staff.