



CHELSEA DISTRICT LIBRARY
BEST SMALL LIBRARY IN AMERICA

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Lori Coryell, Library Director

PHONE: 734-475-8732 x 206

E-MAIL: lcoryell@chelseadistrictlibrary.org

January 24, 2018 | Chelsea, MI

CDL Responds to Recent Incident and Confirms Commitment to the Community

In October 2017, the Chelsea District Library had an incident that caused concern and prompted questions in the community about how we address issues of safety and security. We take your concerns very seriously and appreciate the passion of those in the community who have engaged us on the subject. As members of this community, we are committed to protecting all visitors, especially children, when they are in our building. Please be assured that their safety has been and continues to be of highest priority at CDL.

Every day at CDL we work to create a safe and secure space for our visitors. We accomplish this through rigorous enforcement of policies which are reviewed regularly. Just as important, our staff are trained to observe patron behavior and to immediately but politely confront anyone acting inappropriately. Staff routinely walk through and observe the public areas of our building. Although nothing can completely prevent bad behavior in the library, our staff is a valuable and highly visible deterrent and our most important means to keep all visitors safe.

The very first rule cited in our Patron Behavior Policy concerns violations of law that affect safety and security. Any activity involving the violation or attempted violation of a federal, state, or local law is prohibited. Examples of this activity include assault, indecent exposure, theft, and vandalism. When we see illegal behavior or behavior we suspect to be illegal, **we call the police immediately**, a written library incident report is filed, and the offending patron is suspended. Time may be added to original suspensions if relevant information comes to light. **ALL** persons who have been suspended must schedule a meeting with the director to review policies and the expectations that must be met before they may come back to the library. If there is basis to believe that the suspended patron may not abide by our policies, the patron will not be allowed to

return to the library. In other words, suspended patrons' privileges are not automatically reinstated. Even if some privileges are reinstated, we may place restrictions on how that patron uses the library. Examples include:

- A patron may have to check in and out of the library with staff
- A patron may have to surrender his/her phone upon entry into the facility
- A patron may only be allowed entry into the library during specified hours
- A patron may only use filtered machines for Internet access
- A patron may only use public computers in close proximity to the staff information desk

It is important to note that misinformation about the recent incident has been shared within the community. While we cannot divulge facts that are part of confidential library records, we can say that, due to errors in media accounts and in the initial police record (that has since been corrected), the public has been given an inaccurate portrayal of the offender's actions while in the library. By law, we are not allowed to counter misinformation about this recent incident with facts that are part of our library records. Please understand that we are not trying to conceal information from you. Since 1982, the Michigan Library Privacy Act allows everyone the freedom to read whatever materials they please and use the services and resources of the library without fear of judgment, retaliation, or that others might have access to that information. Library records that are protected by law include the materials checked out, Internet search history, fines owed and paid, when someone enters and leaves the library, the programs attended, etc. These library records also include information about incidents that occur in the library, including those that involve visitors breaking the law and library rules and the discipline that results.

We have always been committed to creating a public space where people of all ages feel safe to pursue their informational, educational, and recreational needs. We take great pride in the fact that incidents are extremely rare in our library, and that, when an incident has occurred, it has been dealt with swiftly and seriously. The offender in this recent incident is now in the court system as a result of prompt and decisive action by our staff. We hope that the information provided here assures you that Chelsea District Library is worthy of your trust. Your concerns are important to us. We invite you to share them through direct conversations with the director or board members or at our regularly scheduled board meetings, where the public is provided two opportunities to share comments. For more information on our policies, please see <http://chelseadistrictlibrary.org/about-us/policies/>. If you have questions or concerns or would like further information, please contact Library Director Lori Coryell or Board President Charlie Taylor at (734) 475-8732.

About Us: Chelsea District Library is a not-for-profit organization whose mission is to provide equal access to quality resources that serve the lifelong cultural, educational and informational needs and interests of all people. The Library currently serves 15,100 residents in the Chelsea district, which includes the City of Chelsea and the Dexter, Lima, Lyndon, and Sylvan townships. Approximately 16,000 individuals visit the library each month. For more information visit chelseadistrictlibrary.org.

#