



# Monterey County

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## Board Report

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**Current Status:** Agenda Ready

**Version:** 1

**Matter Type:** General Agenda Item

Approve and Authorize the County Library Director and/or Designees, to implement the Library Behavior and Banning Policy for Monterey County Free Libraries.

### RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Board of Supervisors:

Approve and Authorize the County Library Director and/or Designees, to implement the Library Behavior and Banning Policy for Monterey County Free Libraries.

### SUMMARY:

Monterey County Free Libraries' mission is to "bring ideas, inspiration, information and enjoyment to our community." The vision of MCFL is "Monterey County is a community where everyone has the opportunity to achieve their potential and pursue happiness."

Over the years, the role of libraries has evolved into that of community centers and library users often consider libraries a place to interact and socialize. Monterey County Free Libraries (MCFL) has long had a reputation as an open and friendly institution where everyone is welcomed without regard to their economic, social, cultural situation, or any other factor, beyond the need of the patron to use the library's facilities, services and programs.

In recent years, the MCFL has experienced a significant increase in the number of incidents of inappropriate, threatening, illegal or disruptive behavior.

Library staff are regularly offered training in managing difficult situations with the primary focus being the safety of public and staff. Staff are also trained and expected to try to de-escalate situations, and attempt to safely resolve all situations so that all library users can continue to use library services without disruption. At the most recent annual mandatory Library Staff Day held on May 14, 2015, Retired Police Officer and Head of Security at the Monterey Bay Aquarium Tom Uretsky trained staff on de-escalating and managing difficult situations.

Typically, Library Staff have to intervene in situations of inappropriate, illegal and disruptive behavior to ensure the rights and safety of patrons and staff. Law enforcement personnel are called upon back staff up when patrons refuse to follow library rules, when safety concerns arise, and to stop illegal activity. The proposed policies provide Staff and patrons specific guidelines on what is expected as appropriate behavior in the Libraries, and possible consequences for inappropriate behavior that has escalated to the point of causing safety concerns or seriously interfering with the ability of other members of the public to use the library facilities as intended.

The Library Director has received input from the Executive Director of Restorative Justice Partners Inc. while preparing this policy.

DISCUSSION:

A large segment of the population that MCFL serves, depends on the library as a place for information, free access to computers and the internet, and a safe place for children, youth and adults to spend time away from home and to get homework help, a place for entertainment, exposure to cultural programming and arts, etc. The proposed policy continues to promote MCFL as an appropriate community use space and is in line with MCFL's mission to bring ideas, inspiration, information and enjoyment to the community, and MCFL's vision that Monterey County is a community where everyone has the opportunity to achieve their potential and pursue happiness.

MCFL is dedicated to providing a welcoming, pleasant and safe environment for all. MCFL, under the direction of the Library Director and/or his/her Designees, determines the rules and regulations for public behavior in its facilities so that library users may use the facilities as they are intended to be used and to best benefit of the largest number of people. These rules are necessary to protect the rights of individuals to safely use and enjoy Library property, materials, and facilities; to protect Library property, materials, and facilities from harm; and to ensure the rights and safety of all Library users, staff and volunteers.

The *Behavior Policy* will enable MCFL staff to prohibit individuals from engaging in illegal, threatening, or seriously disruptive behavior on Library premises. Any individuals violating these rules or disrupting Library service may be temporarily or permanently banned from Library premises. Staff may take any and all appropriate actions including, but not limited to, asking Library users to leave the premises and/or calling law enforcement to enforce Library rules and/or protect Library users, staff, volunteers and/or property. Examples of prohibited behavior are outlined in the *Inappropriate Behavior in the Library* guidelines. The *Behavior Policy* also allows for the suspension of juveniles and other individuals who cannot follow library rules or look after themselves.

The *Behavior Policy* enables MCFL staff to temporarily or permanently ban any individual who repeatedly or seriously displays inappropriate behavior, threatens themselves/others, disrupts the ability of others to use Library facilities or resources, engages in illegal activity, or seriously violates behavior guidelines. Banning may be limited to one or more of all MCFL facilities. Any library user who is banned has the right to appeal such determination to the Library Director as specified in the policy.

The proposed policies will be periodically reviewed and modified by the Library Director and/or his/her Designees, and any major changes will be brought to the Board for approval.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

County Counsel has reviewed the policies and is in support of this recommendation.

FINANCING:

The proposed policies have no anticipated cost effect on the Department or on the County General Fund.

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Cc: County Counsel Office

Attachments:

Library Behavior Policy

Inappropriate Behavior in the Library

Notice of Banning

Notice of Banning to Guardian on Record of a Juvenile/Person

Banning Appeal Letter