

# Living Respectfully in Community

## 1. Where can I go for free Wi-Fi after school?

- A. My local coffee shop
- B. My local library
- C. Back to the school
- D. Your local City Building
- E. My neighbor's router

### **B & D. Your local library offers "free" Wi-Fi to the public and now your local city building does as well!**

You have two places you may go for free internet access. Your family pays taxes to the government who funds your local library and city building. So, in a sense, your family has already paid for this service to you. Coffee Shops offer Wi-Fi service to paying customers. You will see many business professionals and students working at coffee shops while enjoying a cup of coffee with breakfast, soft drink with lunch, or snack and a smoothie. Hanging out in a restaurant, coffee shop, or business establishment without paying for the ability to do so is called **loitering** and is a **criminal offense**. You can have the amenities of a business with a purchase. Wi-Fi is free at school during the school day, but our school has hours of operation and will be closed to students outside of those hours. It is illegal to use your neighbor's Wi-Fi without their consent. That is **theft**. Like **loitering** at a business, **stealing** Wi-Fi from your neighbor is a **misdemeanor crime**.

## 2. Taking Shortcuts. Is it okay to walk through someone's yard or cross the street where it's most convenient to me? I see people do this from time to time.

- A. Yes
- B. No

**B. No.** We are all permitted to walk on public sidewalks and crosswalks, but walking through another's yard without permission is called **trespassing** and crossing the street outside of a crosswalk is called **jaywalking**. Believe it or not, **trespassing** and **jaywalking** are **criminal offenses**. Cars are not required to stop for people crossing outside of crosswalks and drivers are certainly not expecting pedestrians on the roadway in spaces not marked for crossing, so **jaywalking** is dangerous. While you do not often see tickets written for these offenses, there are many reasons why we honor and obey these rules. If you cause an accident while **jaywalking**, or cause damage to private property you will be held responsible.

## 3. Which of the following is not considered public property?

- A. Park Slide
- B. City Bench
- C. Outdoor Restaurant Table
- D. Park Basketball Court

**C. Outdoor restaurant tables are private property belonging to the restaurant owner who buys these tables for the benefit of their paying customers.** Public property consists of things owned by the city for the benefit of the people living in the city. City benches, buildings, playground equipment, and recreational areas are amenities provided for the citizens of Fort Thomas to enjoy. Since we share these things with our fellow neighbors, we take good care of them for one another. Consider how you decide the way in which you want your personal belongings treated, but things shared by others in your home

are treated with respect to the others who use them as well. Maybe graffitiing your bedroom wall is something you would like, but not appropriate in your family room. When something belongs to the public, we get to use it but should consider all others who get to use it as well.

**4. But restaurants *serve* the public. Their tables and chairs are for us, right?**

- A. Yes, when you buy something there.
- B. Yes, when you ask first.
- C. Yes, when you're with someone who buys something.
- D. Yes, if you bring your own food and are at least eating something.

**A. Tables & chairs inside and outside of restaurants, coffee shops, and ice cream shops are for the people who pay to use those tables and chairs.** If you pay for an ice cream, you may sit in the ice cream shop's chairs. If you buy a frappe or smoothie you can sit at a table outside of the coffee shop. The parks and City Building are places where you are invited to simply hang out and enjoy. To enjoy a restaurant, store or business location, you must pay for the services provided by **that** business. It is not appropriate to purchase something from one business to enjoy at another unless you are also purchasing something at that business.

**5. Why do things cost more at businesses than they cost for me to make at home?**

- A. Because I pay for the food + the convenience of someone else making it for me.
- B. The person taking my order, serving, and cleaning up after me gets paid.
- C. I'm paying to use the Wi-Fi, restroom, comfortable chair, and place to hang out.
- D. The owner wants money.
- E. All of the Above

**E. Business prices are priced appropriately typically based on percentage models that support all of the above answers.** Let's consider a \$5 student special at the coffee shop and a percentage model.

- **30%, \$1.50 Food Cost:** Pays the cost to the business for buying the food and drink.
- **30%, \$1.50 Payroll Cost:** Pays the multiple employees who ordered & delivered the food, prepared the food, rang up your food, and served your food.
- **30%, \$1.50 Overhead Cost:** Pays for the building and utilities like water, power, gas, sewer & grease services, amenities like Wi-Fi, music & television, to-go packaging, maintenance of restrooms, furniture, kitchen equipment, technology, etc.
- **5%, \$ .25 Retained Earnings:** Pays for participation in city events, additional equipment needs, emergencies, and future business plans.
- **5%, \$.25 Return on Investment:** Money used for donation requests and for paying the owners for their investment of time, money, energy, wisdom, etc.

It may be helpful to understand the above percentages are ideal, but not typical for a business in its first 3-5 years especially. Most new businesses do not make a profit until after their 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> year. Owners serve their community and sacrifice without pay for an eventual return on their investment. Because the number of sales coming in are not yet supporting the team and business, the business owners and leaders work very hard to know and understand their community, become efficient in their processes, increase sales opportunities that support their community, and perfect their craft to offer excellent service.

## 6. Where can I ride my bike?

- A. It depends on the part of town
- B. Anywhere, as long as I'm on the sidewalk
- C. Only on the street
- D. Only in city parks

**A. It actually depends on where you are riding.** NO ONE may ride a bicycle on a sidewalk within a business district. This is a city ordinance with a fine attached because it is unsafe for bicyclists and business patrons. Consider the Entertainment District of Fort Thomas, The Midway, where servers walk across the sidewalk delivering trays of food to tables, little kids run around with ice cream cones, and storefront entrances are right on the sidewalk. Or the Central Business District near the city building where neighbors walk around with hot coffee in and out of business doors reading documents, carrying merchandise, or congregating with friends outside of the coffee shop. In the city's business districts, bike riders must get off of their bikes and walk their bike to avoid injuring others. These business districts are to be safe spaces for people to walk about. In areas where bikers are allowed to ride on sidewalks, pedestrians still have the right-of-way. This means the people walking on the sidewalk do not get out of the way of bike riders. It's the bike riders' responsibility to announce themselves and maneuver around walkers. If a bike rider intends to pass a pedestrian, they are to give an audible signal before passing. You might say, "Passing on your left." If you ride on the road, you must understand and obey the rules of the road for a bicyclist which are very similar to driving a car. Riding a bike or scooter through town is a serious responsibility you will want to discuss with your parent.

## 7. Which of the actions below can be punishable with jail time and/or a fine?

- A. Tossing a finished drink can in someone's yard
- B. Hanging out in a coffee shop or at an outside restaurant table without buying anything
- C. Darting across the street where there is no crosswalk
- D. Using my neighbor's Wi-Fi signal
- E. Writing my name or a funny phrase on a park slide
- F. All of the above

**F. Believe it or not, the above listed are all criminal actions.** But you've seen this often, right? Let's call them what they are: A. **Littering**, B. **Loitering**, C. **Jaywalking**, D. **Stealing**, E. **Defacing Public Property**. These are all **misdemeanor crimes**. Misdemeanors are offenses that are punishable up to one year of jail time and/or fines. People do often get away with these offenses. But at any time, a community member may call in an offense to the police to enforce these city rules. Often neighbors and businesses offer grace, communicate the rules once or twice, but will ultimately take action if behavior does not change. Most businesses video record activity in their establishments and may share these recordings with law enforcement when necessary to ensure their business is a safe and orderly place for all community members to enjoy. Sometimes a crime is reported near the businesses and businesses are called upon by law enforcement to share their video footage for further investigation.

# Do these Rules have Purpose?

Let's discuss and explore why these things are considered crimes.

- **Littering** | Doesn't someone get paid to pick up trash in the city?
- **Loitering** | Don't I have right to hang out where I want?
- **Jaywalking** | Shouldn't I be able to cross if there is not a crosswalk where I need one.
- **Stealing** | How is it stealing if they'll never know? They have plenty of money anyway.
- **Destruction of Public Property** | Won't they just fix it? It's not that big of a deal.
- **Bike Riding** | Everyone rides in business districts and no one has gotten in trouble. It's fine.

**Play each one out. How does each offense affect the community as a whole?**

Have you unknowingly committed a crime? Don't worry, you're not a criminal. But you have broken rules set in place for the purpose of living safely, orderly, and respectfully in community. Consequences for breaking city laws could be as simple as jail time or fines, but could also mean harm, injury, death and destruction. Just be smart and grateful if your actions haven't caused you or others harm. Start making wise decisions going forward and consider how you play an important role in community. A criminal is one who knowingly chooses to continue in illegal behavior. You certainly do not need to be a criminal, because why would you act against a community that is for you?

# Do We Really Need Rules?

Would we really need rules, laws, and ordinances if we fully understood what it means to live in community? Would we still be tempted to throw trash in a neighbor's yard if we knew how hard they were cheering for us at the game last week? We might instead honor our neighbor and carry trash to a city trash can. Would it make sense to draw pictures on or damage park equipment requiring its temporary removal when similar equipment served us well as kids? Would we steal from school or local businesses if we knew how much of their effort and discussion centered on serving and supporting us well? Would we loiter and hinder a local restaurant from growth and income when city tables and benches have already been provided for us? Financially supporting the business or letting others do so, could mean that business is successful enough to be there for us in 5-15 years when we want to study, hold business meetings, go on a date or bring our kids to play. Why would we need rules to tell us not to steal, loiter, damage property, litter, or jaywalk if we realized how much we were already cared for and what has already been provided for us as a member of community. Need something? Need a place to go? Rather than abuse others or the system to get it, we could just ask. We might find out that we are more valued and others are more willing and generous than we realize. You can see it doesn't make much sense to act like an outsider when living in community. Living respectfully in community opens more doors for opportunity and enjoyment for all of us within our city.